

**MINUTES**  
**HOUSING STRATEGY TASK FORCE**  
Saanich Municipal Hall, Council Chambers  
Via Electronic Communications  
November 26, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.

Present: Chair de Vries and Vice Chair Harper

Staff: Cameron Scott, Manager, Community Planning; Current Planning; Nadine Kawata, Planner, Community Planning; Gina Lyons, Senior Planning, Current Planning; Alanna McDonagh, Planner, Community Planning; and Tara Da Silva, Senior Committee Clerk

Facilitators: Lani Brunn, Lead Facilitator, CitySpaces; Julia Bahen, Facilitator, CitySpaces; Kevin Green, Facilitator, CitySpaces; Anna Zhou, Facilitator, CitySpaces;

Members: S. Dutchak; C. Forester; C. Friesen; E. Gibson; G. Gillespie; R. Kelley; L. Mari; M. Poirier; D. Posavad; J. Reilly; L. Spalteholz; J. Tarbotton; V. Wynn-Williams

Regrets: E. Dahli; M. Holland; K. Wiseman

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### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair de Vries called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

### **CHAIR'S REMARKS**

- A reminder was given that the meetings are being webcast and about Saanich's Respectful Workplace Policy. This meeting's focus is Uptown Douglas Plan and the Criteria for the Prioritization Process.

### **TASK FORCE COMMENTS**

- Concerns were expressed regarding the challenge that Development Cost Charges (DCCs) are for a number of projects that are happening in Saanich. Dawson Heights, Broadmead and Linwood face \$500,000 in extra costs if they cannot get their building permits approved by February 25, 2021.
- Questions were raised about whether Council will consider grandfathering these projects as these costs were not anticipated when these project proformas were put together.
- Applications are also subject to the District's lengthy project approvals process. DCCs may impact the viability and the possibility of delivering immediate results for immediate, affordable housing that's actually in the pipeline and ready to go.
- In the development community, there is a feeling of being penalized for something they have no control over.
- There is a potential risk to Community Amenity Contributions (CAC) if they are not contemplated carefully. Saanich is heading in the direction of CACs and DCCs becoming inadvertent land-use tools by applying them to projects and guiding things away from their intended use.
- These tools are meant to be targeted financial instruments to specific items are now becoming a general tax on the overall process.

### **UPTOWN DOUGLAS PLAN**

- A. McDonagh, Planner, Community Planning, presented and highlighted to the Task Force:
- Phase 1 of the Uptown Douglas Plan (UDP) began in Q3 of 2015 and the Plan was adopted by Council in August 2020.
  - Council's direction was to capture feedback and recommendations and get an economic

evaluation of the land transition of industrial, commercial and mixed-use land use designations.

- Key implementation items:
  - Pilot pre-zoning
    - Urban mixed-use
    - Mixed-employment
  - Community Amenity Contributions
  - Development Permit Area Design Guidelines for Uptown-Douglas
  - Parking standards
- Key plan directions:
  - Put pedestrians first
  - Create a landmark hub
  - Accelerate rapid transit on Douglas Street
  - Create a network of public places
  - Lead growth with residential
  - Conserve light industrial
  - Transform Oak Street
  - Convert grey to green
- Neighbourhood sub-areas:
  - Douglas-Oak Hub
  - Tennyson Industrial Quarter
  - Rudd Neighbourhood
  - Rutledge Neighbourhood
  - Mt. View Neighbourhood
  - Nigel Valley – Municipal Campus
  - Tolmie Quarter
- Land uses and height designations:
  - neighbourhood residential
  - neighbourhood apartment
  - mid-rise residential
  - urban mixed-use
  - core, mixed employment
  - Tennyson Industrial
  - mixed institutional
  - park/trail.
- Land use direction:
  - Create opportunities
    - Residential
      - Type and tenure
    - Employment
      - Mixed employment
      - Industrial
      - Mixed institutional
    - Development
      - Density
      - Pre-zoning
- Land use objectives
  - Expand residential development
    - Provide multi-unit buildings
  - Support growth with improvements
  - Improve connections & movement
  - Identify as a regional “heart”
    - Protect & enhance industrial lands
    - Maintain commercial corridor

- Land use policy
  - Expand residential development
  - Enhance industrial lands
  - Foster economic vibrancy
  - Intensify and optimize employment lands
  - Facilitate balanced intensification
  - Connect spaces to users
  - Provide public space
    - Including greenspace
  - Improve streetscapes
- Housing direction
  - Promote diversity and supply
    - Residential building type and tenure
      - Non-market housing
        - renewal/redevelopment
      - Supportive housing
      - Market rental housing
      - Family-appropriate
    - Development incentives
      - Fee reductions (i.e. DCC waivers)
      - Parking reductions
      - Application priority
- Housing objectives:
  - Expand housing choices
    - Diversity of densities and forms
  - Provide family-appropriate housing
  - Prioritize affordable and supportive housing
  - Support growth with improvements
- Housing policy
  - Target family-appropriate housing
  - Promote child-friendly communities
  - Include private outdoor space and common outdoor amenity space
  - Develop community parks and open space
  - Support non-market and supportive housing
    - Density, financial support, etc.
- Supporting guidelines:
  - Building type and use
  - Streetscape interface
    - Significant streets
  - Design guidelines
    - Principles and guidelines
      - Site context and organization
      - Building massing and design
      - Public realm
    - Building setbacks, stepbacks and tower separation
- Plan summary
  - Provide a balance of residential options
    - Density
    - Affordable and supportive housing
    - Building type and tenure
    - Family-appropriate housing
  - Maintain & enhance industrial lands
  - Expand commercial land uses
  - Create mixed-employment opportunities

- Support growth with improvements

### **REPORT BACK ON UPTOWN DOUGLAS PLAN**

- The Plan encourages new affordable housing.
- Saanich market rents cannot keep up with the heights proposed in construction. There is a conflict between density and affordability.
- It is problematic framing that this area is the only area for densification.
- More densification is possible. Scaling down at the edges does not need to be as extreme.
- Prioritize the public realm upfront.
- The Plan does not encourage affordable housing in and of itself; it is more about DCC waivers, acknowledging affordable housing as a CAC and not asking for both.
- Height and density are not the same things.
- There is co-operative and subsidized housing in the nearby area that is reaching their end of life. New affordable housing cannot be built at the cost of existing affordable housing.
- The Plan will encourage new affordable housing through supply; focus on rental housing is good to see.
- The Plan is not visionary enough – more density is needed and minimum heights.
- Take into account what could be achieved, given urban design considerations.
- Additional height and density on the table; must make sure it works from a financial perspective.
- Zoning and designations would not necessarily achieve more affordability on their own; Saanich would need supporting policies.
- Stepbacks can create additional cost and design complexity.
- Density is centred around the transit corridor but concentrating most of the population along a noisy roadway; there are health and air quality impacts.
- The Plan lacks green space relative to the level of density/amount of anticipated population.
- Parking requirements and concrete construction have affordability impacts.
- The focus should be on rental and ownership (occupied units).
- It might be better to have more density in different areas within the Plan area.
- Taller heights supported and needed to meet Saanich's housing needs.
- Use pre-zoning to focus on residential uses.
- Fast-track developments that provide housing that meets housing needs identified in the needs assessment.

### **ACTION PRIORITIZATION PROCESS AND CRITERIA**

Staff; presented and highlighted to the Task Force:

- Prioritization process:
  - The key to success is Task Force input.
  - Use the Framework to justify decisions through a clear and transparent process.
  - Helps to determine a roadmap for implementation.
  - Replace evaluation matrix using criteria with qualitative process using considerations what will help to guide the prioritization process and stimulate discussion.
  - Opportunities to make adjustments.
- Establishing considerations:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> step – identify a set of considerations that align with the purpose and objectives established for the Housing Strategy and Focus Areas
  - Considerations include: Impact, implementation (with staff input), remove numerical score.
    - Part 1 Impact Considerations:
      - Affordability Outcomes – Action creates or preserves affordable, long-term, secure housing for low income households.

- NEW – Increases Housing Supply – Directly supports an increase in the supply of housing units over the next ten years in order to accommodate people of different ages, incomes, household structure.
- NEW – Addresses Housing Diversity – Directly supports a diversity of housing types (diversity of forms, tenure, unit sizes) over the next 10 years in order to accommodate people of different ages, incomes, household structure.
- NEW – Housing Needs Impact – Addresses major existing and projected housing gaps and needs identified in the Housing Needs Report: affordable housing, rental housing, and housing for people with disabilities, housing for seniors, one-person households, lone parent households, housing for individuals experiencing homelessness.
- Equity Impact – Action leads to more equitable housing outcomes, by reducing barriers to affordable housing opportunities and improving housing outcomes for people of all ages, incomes and abilities.
- NEW – Strategic Alignment – Opportunity to build on existing momentum (requiring minimal work to build “buy-in”). Momentum gained through:
  - Alignment with municipal policies and programs that are underway or recently approved (such as the Climate Plan, Active Transportation Plan, Uptown-Douglas Action Plan, Local Area Plan updates)
  - Existing public/political attention on an issue or action
  - Opportunities to collaborate with the CRD or municipalities in the CRD that are working on a similar action.
- Partnership and Funding Opportunities – This criterion considers the potential to address housing objectives through external funding opportunities or partnerships with BC Housing, CRD, non-profit housing providers, or other partners.
- Part 2 Implementation Considerations:
  - Level of Complexity – The complexity to implement the action considers the interdepartmental coordination; multijurisdictional collaboration; agreements with multiple partners; level of risk; and/or legal factors.
  - Resources Required (staff time and financial)
    - Costs – capital, staff time, consultants, administration, operating costs, etc.
    - Staff time – time required to implement the action
  - Time to Complete – This criterion reflects the amount of time required to initiate and deliver results and meet the objective of the strategy. Actions that can be undertaken quickly received a higher score. While staff time can be considered; this is focused more on the whole process and implementation time.
  - NEW – Level of Municipal Influence on Outcome – Ability of the municipality to have direct control of a potential action.

## REPORT BACK ON PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA/CONSIDERATIONS

- There is agreement that this process is better than the scoring approach – first determine what is important and then run the list of actions through criteria and identify timing (short/medium/long).
- Focus on quick-wins.
- Classify actions into government-driven versus market-based solutions.
- Strategic alignment and funding could be under implementation.
- Recommendation to empower the Chair of the Task Force to fill in gaps between actions to expedite the process.
- Equity impact is not just about affordable housing but about housing in general.
- When the housing market softens, costing is more favourable.
- Quick-starts are important – implementation considerations should be tweaked to take this into account.
- Include BC Housing and CMHC for strategic alignment.
- Resources required/time to complete are very closely related.
- The certainty level may be helpful to add (high impact – bylaw change; medium – incentive; low – secondary plan or policy that relies on outside action).
- Graphics may be beneficial to show or organize the prioritization process.
- Housing needs impact – how do you pull these out and rank or order them?
- Full support for the most part – the separation between impact and implementation makes sense.
- Housing needs impact needs to be a regional focus. There are not just vulnerable groups in Saanich; there are vulnerable groups across the region.
- Out of the box ideas should not be discounted because Saanich cannot do things on its own.
- Do not stop when we think the problem is solved.
- Is it fun? Can it put Saanich on the map?
- Consider if there are any negative externalities?

**MOVED by J. Reilly and Seconded by M. Poirier: “That the facilitators, Saanich staff and Council representatives:**

- 1. Collect the input from this meeting, organize and submit a summary for a concise recommendation or a draft motion for feedback from the Uptown Douglas Plan based on the Task Force’s considerations and discussion; and**
- 2. Provide a revised form of the criteria based on the Task Force input;**

**and bring these items forward to the next meeting.”**

**CARRIED**

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

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CHAIR

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

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COMMITTEE SECRETARY